"Push-Button" Position Description (PD) Capabilities Description

(An automated Federal Employee Position Description (PD) drafting tool)
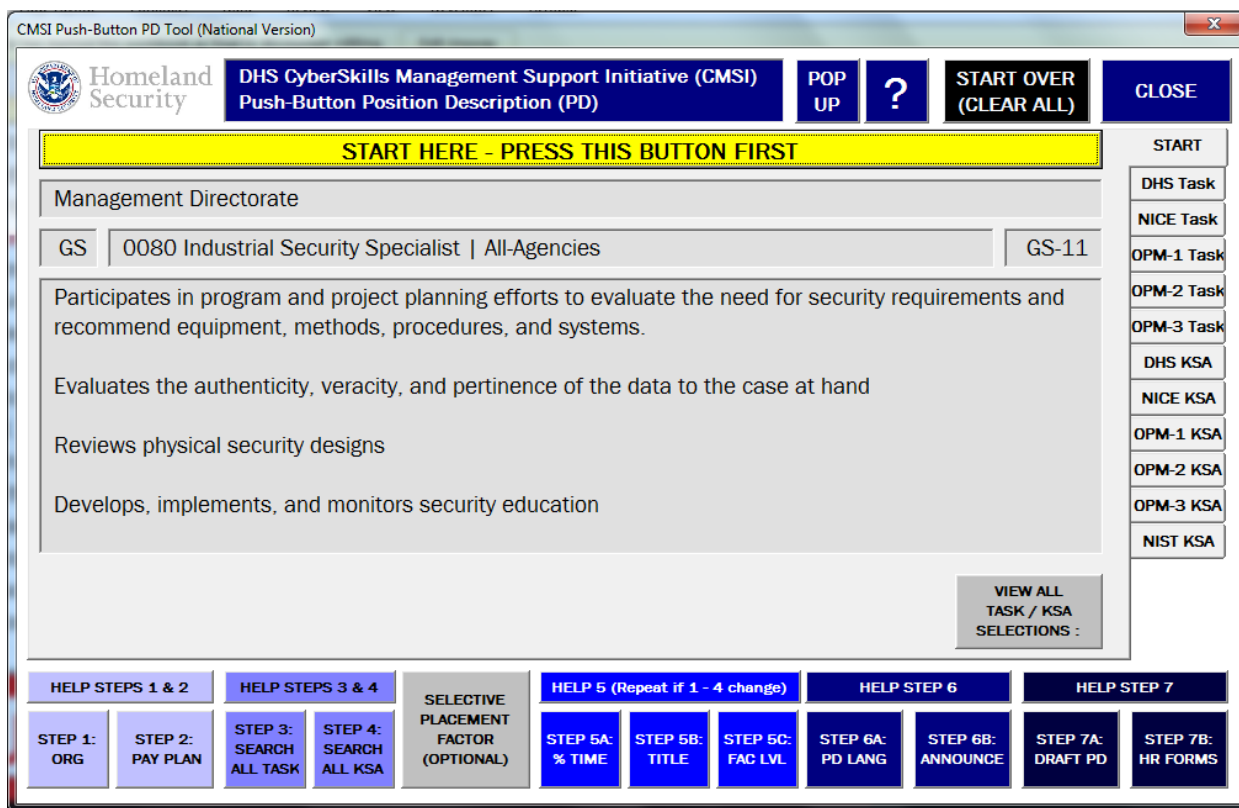

Figure 1: Main User Interface

OVERVIEW:

This Tool is a no-cost, self-contained, Excel workbook under 3 MB. Managers, supervisors, and HR Specialists can rapidly draft Position Descriptions without the need for extensive training or prior knowledge of position classification. The entire PD generation timeline becomes a process that can be completed, not in days, but in a matter of hours. It is designed to present language from multiple authoritative sources and standards for duty, task, and KSA (knowledge, skills, and abilities); rapidly capture the hiring official's requirements; and present them in a package that can be easily integrated into the agency's current HR processes. The underlying data within the tool may be updated or customized locally as an Excel Spreadsheet, without tech support.

CURRENT CAPABILITIES:

0080 Security Administration with parentheticals	0132 Intelligence
0201 HR Specialist with parentheticals	0301 Miscellaneous Administration and Program Specialist
0306 Government Information Specialist	0332 Computer Operation
0340 Program Manager	0343 Management and Program Analyst
0390 Telecom	0391 Telecom with parentheticals
0501 Financial Administration and Program	0510 Accounting
0511 Auditing	0560 Budget Analysis
0801 General Engineering	0810 Civil Engineer with parentheticals
0830 Mechanical Engineer with parentheticals	0850 Electrical Engineering
0854 Computer Engineer with parentheticals	1102 Contract Specialist with parentheticals
1104 Property Disposal	1105 Purchasing
1106 Procurement Clerical and Technician	1501 General Mathematics and Statistics
1515 Operations Research	1520 Mathematics
1529 Mathematical Statistics	1550 Computer Scientist
1801 General Inspection Investigative Enforcement	1802 Compliance Inspection
1805 Investigative Analyst	1810 Investigator
1811 Criminal Investigator	1895 CBP Officer
1896 Border Patrol Agent	2210 IT Specialist with parentheticals
Supervisory Title	Lead Title
Project/Program Manager Parenthetical	IT Project/Program Manager Parenthetical
DHS HSAC Mission-Critical Tasks and Skills	NICE 2.0 (Draft) Framework Tasks and Skills
NIST SP 800-16 Skills	OPM MOSAIC Skills
Associated HR Forms generation	GS-pay scale
Ability to mark Task or Skill Tags (to identify qualifications for individual or group incentives / benefits).	Enforces critical "bright-line" rules; ex. 25% major duty; majority duty determines occupational series; awards Occupational Series 0301 when no major duty achieves 25%; amongst others.

OTHER CAPABILITIES:

- **Version Differences**. There are three generations of the Tool; Gen1, Gen2, and Gen3.
  - Gen1 focused upon collecting functionality requirements from hiring officials. A meeting of the Department's technical cyber points of contact was convened to review and provide input on the tool. The overall interface design and functionality is a direct result of many comments and refinements proposed by line and hiring managers.
  - Gen2 focused upon collecting functionality requirements from human capital classification specialists. The tool has been circulated within the cross-Component representatives on the DHS Classification Policy Council for comments and recommendations. Specific steps, such as allocation of the percentage of time to tasks, were a direct result of comments received from human capital personnel. It has been extensively demonstrated within the Department with pilots in different Headquarters elements.
  - Gen3 approximately doubled the number of supported occupational series.
- **Efficiency**.   The Tool facilitates drafting a federal employee Position Description from scratch in one to three hours. The current record to generate a PD, classify the PD, send to OPM, and post the position on USAJobs is two weeks.
- **Standards**. The Tool comes preloaded with disparate standards from several Occupational Series and skill description sources. In theory, any skill source could be decomposed into a corresponding spreadsheet tab and maintained from there. Since the tool dynamically picks up any changes to the underlying spreadsheet; closing the user interface, making the spreadsheet change, and re-opening the user interface is normally all that's needed to make a content change.
- **Effectiveness**. The Tool requires little to no prior training in either tool functionality or the associated human capital processes.   One hour of formal training is provided upon request. The tool has been used to generate actual Position Descriptions in at several offices within DHS, including the Office of the Chief Information Officer.
- **Transferability**. The tool may be repopulated with locally-generated data to support virtually any Federal Organization.   A proof-of-concept was performed with the Department of Defense Chief Information Officer Policy office to reflect how quickly (approximately two weeks to load data, reconfigure a separate DoD-only interface for the data, and test) the tool could reflect DoD data within the Tool. Since the Tool is an Excel Spreadsheet without privacy data, it is normally a trivial task to incorporate into agency accreditation processes. Currently, the tool is also provided free to government agencies with free support by the CMSI team.
- **Scalability**. The Tool is largely only limited by Microsoft Excel's technical capabilities (specifically, the available memory in the system its run on). Currently, the tool is under 3 MB in size, contains no privacy data, and may be sent as a file attachment or posted to a website. Adding a new occupational series or occupational series parenthetical title normally takes one week.

HISTORY:

The original project requirements originated from the 2012 Homeland Security Advisory Council Cyberskills Task Force Report—specifically the recommendations to adopt and maintain an authoritative list of mission-critical cybersecurity tasks and to make the hiring process smooth and supportive. Given budget and resource constraints, the question became how to operationalize mission-critical cybersecurity tasks into a "smooth and supportive" hiring process.

In the 2013 NICE Conference, the Executive Director of CMSI (CyberSkills Management Support Initiative) discussed this need, and there was consensus across agencies that were clear that the federal Position Description a critical document to ensuring the success of federal human capital processes—especially hiring. Unless the federal Position Description accurately described the position duties, tasks, and KSAs, it was possible to generate incorrect USAJobs announcements, vacancy questionnaires, or perform ineffective resume screening. However, generating high-quality, highly-technical position descriptions required the ability to fuse multiple, disparate guidance sources in an easy-to-use interface; adaptable to any specific agency or organizational requirements.

The problem was recognized, but not acted upon until an unanticipated event– the 2013 Federal Government shutdown. A fee-for-service Federal Employee programmer was able to draft a working prototype tool capable of meeting the baseline requirements. The Tool utilized a simple Excel workbook, requiring little to no user training and eliminating many of the major hurdles to operationalization.

By the following year, in the 2014 NICE Conference, the PushButtonPD™ Gen1 was officially presented by the Executive Director of CMSI to the Public was capable of producing seventeen (17) types of Occupational Series Position Descriptions. Gen2 followed approximately six months later, and Gen3 was finalized by August 2015; supporting thirty-six (36) Occupational Series.

The tool continues to undergo further development and refinement.